

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An image processing apparatus comprising:
 - input means for inputting image data;
 - detecting means for detecting information relating to a copyright contained in the input image data;
 - querying means which, if no information relating to the copyright is detected, is for querying a database as to whether information relating to a copyright corresponding to an image represented by the input image data exists in the database; and
 - add-on means for adding information relating to a copyright, which conforms to the result of querying the database, onto the input image data.
2. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said input means is an image input device.
3. The apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising display means for displaying the information relating to the copyright.
4. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said querying means transmits the input image data to the database and receives from said database information relating to a copyright corresponding to this input image data.
5. ~~A processing method in an apparatus for registering a copyright, comprising the steps of:~~
~~receiving a copyright registration request, which~~

~~is for registering copyright of data, via a network;~~

in response to the received copyright registration request, transmitting a registration fee request to a device that issued the copyright registration request;

5 in response to consent to pay the registration fee, embedding an electronic watermark in the data; and transmitting the data having the embedded electronic watermark to said device.

6. The method according to claim 5, wherein the copyright registration request includes at least one of a term during which copyright protection of said data is desired, data representing monetary compensation regarding said data, and amount of said data.

7. The method according to claim 5, wherein a publication fee applies in a case where said data is published on a Web page.

15 8. The method according to claim 7, wherein the publication fee is a fixed rate at start of publication and is decided by number of times said data is distributed data after publication.

20 9. The method according to claim 7, wherein the publication fee is a fixed rate at start of publication and is decided by term of publication of said data after publication.

25 10. The method according to claim 5, wherein said electronic watermark includes information indicative of

~~a copyrighted article, a code specific to the copyrighted article, and address information of the apparatus which performed the copyright registration.~~

11. The method according to claim 5, wherein said
5 electronic watermark is invisible or nearly invisible to
the eye.

12. The method according to claim 5, further comprising the steps of:

storing the data having the embedded electronic watermark:

in response to a distribution request to distribute said data, issuing a compensation request, which requests monetary compensation regarding said data, to a device that issued said distribution request; and

15 in response to receipt of consent, which is in
regard to said compensation request, from said device
that issued the distribution request, transmitting said
data to said device that issued the distribution
request.

20 13. The method according to claim 12, wherein in response to distribution of said data, generation of compensation conforming to said data is notified to the device that issued the copyright registration request corresponding to said data.

25 14. An image processing method comprising the steps of:
inputting image data,

detecting information relating to a copyright contained in the input image data;
if no information relating to the copyright is detected, querying a database as to whether information relating to a copyright corresponding to an image represented by the input image data exists in the database; and

adding information relating to a copyright, which conforms to the result of querying the database, onto the input image data.

15. A recording medium on which program code for image processing has been recorded, said program code including at least:

code of a step of inputting image data;
15 code of a step of detecting information relating to a copyright contained in the input image data;
code of a step in which, if no information relating to the copyright is detected, a database is queried as to whether information relating to a copyright corresponding to an image represented by the input image data exists in the database; and
20 code of a step of adding information relating to a copyright, which conforms to the result of querying the database, onto the input image data.